

## You Choose Who Works For You

Robert Hodges, Manager, Assessment Section

Should you ever need a contractor to do an environmental clean up, the choice is yours. By law, the contractor you select must hold current certification from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program. Other than that, you're free to decide who you want working for you. At this time, there are 224 UST Program-certified contractors. Although these companies vary in size and services, any one of them should be able to do the job.

If a cleanup is funded by the State Underground Petroleum Environmental Response Bank (SUPERB), one of the DHEC forms you will receive asks whether you would like to handle the site rehabilitation work yourself (Owner-Operator Lead) or have the agency handle it for you (State Lead).

If you choose Owner-Operator Lead, DHEC will give you the information you need, and you will hire the contractor you want

to do the work. After you tell us the name of the contractor you've hired, we will send the instructions to you and the contractor.

You may hire one contractor to do all of the work or different contractors for different types of work. Your relationship with the contractor will be just like it is with anyone else you hire to work for you. If you are happy with the work, please let us know. Similarly, if you're unhappy with something your contractor has done, please let us know. In either case, always remember that the contractor is working for you.

If you want State Lead, the Department will choose a contractor from a pool of companies already operating under State contracts. The Department will hire a contractor on your behalf and manage the contractor's work. DHEC will send you copies of letters and reports and keep you informed of work being done at your facility. These contractors perform specific jobs for the State. (For example, one contractor may install monitoring wells, and a different contractor may collect samples from the wells).

Generally, State contracts run for two or three years. When the contracts expire, they are bid and awarded again.

The business of environmental site rehabilitation can be highly competitive. You may receive advertisements and sales presentations from many contractors. Generally, contractors will ask that you sign a form stating that you choose them to work for you. Signing this form is the proper way to choose your contractor; however, we know that the process can be confusing and involve difficult decisions. When choosing an environmental site rehabilitation contractor, you don't have to make the decision alone. Just as you would before hiring anyone, take time to learn as much about the contractors as you can. Do not hesitate to check contractor certification credentials by calling Barbara Boyd at (803) 896-6240 or 1-800-826-5435 (within South Carolina only). You may also call the Assessment and Corrective Action Division at the same numbers to get more information on this topic.

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## It's the Right Thing To Do. Vapor Recovery, That Is.

Leslie Yasinsac, Compliance Inspector

Ever wondered about those gasoline tank top openings with orange caps or noticed the funny nozzles on gas pumps in Georgia, North Carolina, or Tennessee?

These are part of vapor recovery systems. Vapor recovery systems trap the gasoline vapors that rise when gasoline is transferred in or out of underground storage tanks. The recovery systems keep the hazardous vapors out of the air we breathe.

Stage I Vapor Recovery occurs when a tanker uses a hose to fill an underground storage tank with gasoline. A second hose is connected from the top of the underground tank back into the top of the tanker. This allows vapors that are pushed out of the tank by the incoming fuel to flow back into the tanker. Otherwise, these vapors would be released into the atmosphere.

Some facilities in South Carolina feature another piece of hardware associated with vapor recovery. Tank systems at these facilities have a pressure/vacuum relief valve connected to each vapor vent pipe. This valve helps insure that most of the vapors being pushed out of the tank will flow into the vapor recovery hose and onto the tank truck. Without this valve, whenever the pressure in the tank increases, vapors escape into the atmosphere. This can happen when the tank warms up or when a delivery is made. The valve directs the

vapors into the vapor recovery hose. This valve only opens when pressure or a vacuum in the tank top is high enough to open the relief valve.

Stage II Vapor Recovery occurs during vehicle refueling. Thanks to a double-walled delivery hose and a specialized nozzle, the vapors that would normally be pushed out of the vehicle's fuel tank and into the air are collected and sent back to the underground tank or a recovery system.

Why do Vapor Recovery? Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in petroleum vapors can contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone, a major cause of respiratory problems. Ozone is formed when VOCs and nitrogen oxides from vehicles and industries react in sunlight. When ground-level ozone levels are high, older people, active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease can have shortness of breath, wheezing, and coughing. These vapors also contain benzene and formaldehyde, which are known cancer-causing chemicals. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that vapor recovery systems can reduce vapor releases from underground storage tanks systems by as much as 86 percent.

The results can be impressive. The Stage I Vapor Recovery program in the Chicago area

reduces volatile hydrocarbon emissions by nearly five tons per day. The Stage II Vapor Recovery program in Illinois reduces hydrocarbon emissions by more than 35 tons per day across the state and saves over four million gallons of gasoline annually. Closer to home, Stage I Vapor Recovery in Forsyth County, North Carolina, prevents the release of 701 tons of gasoline vapors per year.

More than 1200 facilities in South Carolina have those orange tank top openings that make Stage I Vapor Recovery possible. Fuel delivery tankers should already be fitted with equipment for Stage I Vapor Recovery. That's because the government requires that tankers include a vapor recovery method for use while they are being filled at bulk storage facilities or terminals. A few facilities in South Carolina also have the equipment in place to perform Stage II Vapor Recovery. Most of these facilities are owned by tank owners who also own facilities in states where Stage II Vapor Recovery is required.

Currently, there are no requirements to use Stage I or Stage II Vapor Recovery systems in South Carolina. But more than 28 percent of our facilities could begin Stage I Vapor Recovery right now at no cost.

Let's get ahead of the curve for a change.

## That's Sump'n Else

Tanitra Marshall, Compliance Inspector

As owners and operators, have you ever looked in your dispenser sump? Have you ever pulled the manway covers to look in the submersible turbine pump (STP) sump?

Some states require monthly sump checks as a preventive measure, and for good reason. Routinely monitoring sumps can help create a "comfort zone" for tank owners.

The dispenser sump is where the first signs of an active leak from the dispenser can be spotted. Dispenser connections sometimes work loose during routine maintenance activities, and valve bodies develop leaks due to everyday wear and tear.

Although the dispenser sump is there to catch drips from the dispenser, a small, continuing drip can overflow it. This causes the sump to overflow and release petroleum to the environment.

Looking in the dispenser sump also allows you to check the condition of product piping and the "boots" that seal the sump from the environment. The dispenser sump is one of only two places in the system where the owner or operator can examine flexible piping to detect where the piping has "grown" or split and might need replacement. It's also wise to check that old filters from previous filter changes have not been left in the dispenser sump.

A sump with water in it along with steel piping is another potential problem. The water provides a path for corrosive action to begin. Monitoring the sump regularly to remove the water and repair the sump can solve this problem.

STP sumps should also be checked regularly. Like dispenser sumps, these sumps are the first line of defense against a release from the pump or the piping.

On occasion, inspectors have opened STP sumps to find them overflowing with gasoline. Owners have been heard to remark, "I guess I should have looked in there more often." Besides monitoring for product or water in the sump, owners should also check for signs that the backfill around the sump has begun to move and push the walls of the sump in. Inspectors commonly see both dispenser and STP sumps with one side of the wall bulging. In these cases, it is only a matter of time before the sump fails as a defense against releases.

The compliance team encourages owners and operators to routinely inspect their equipment. A quick peek under the dispenser or in the STP sump can head off problems before they become releases. If you are uncertain where and what to look for, call the Compliance Help Desk at (803) 896-6240 or (within SC) 1-800-TANK HELP.

## Tank Doctor

Leslie Yasinsac, Compliance Section

**QUESTION:** Dear Tank Doctor: I just paid a lot of money for this tank gauge. It's doing all the testing I need, right?

**ANSWER:** Automatic tank gauges can be wonderful machines. They can keep inventory records, watch for water in tanks, monitor for theft, and even test tanks and lines. However, they do have limitations.

One limitation is that an owner/operator needs to understand what the tank gauge report means. For instance, I recently looked at the daily inventory and test report from a tank gauge at a local facility. The report seemed to show a passing test for each tank for each of the past 12 months. However, on closer look, I discovered that

the most recent successful test for any tank at the facility was actually last November. The report listed both the date when the report was printed (November, December, January, etc.), but it also showed that the most recent successful test was started ("Test Started" date) and completed ("Updated" date) in November 2004. The owner had faithfully saved a "passing" test report for each month, but had failed to note that for six months, the passing test was from last November.

This is not the only example of a tank gauge limitation. At another underground storage tank (UST) facility, the limitation was not the date of the test, but the type of test. Regulations require that tanks pass a 0.2 gal/h test at least once a month. The operator at this facility had faithfully saved a

passing test each month, but the inspector noticed that one month, instead of the usual "0.2 gal/h test pass," the slip showed a "Gross Test Pass." What's the difference? Well, an "Annual" test is a 0.1 gal/h test, a "Periodic" test is a 0.2 gal/h test, and a "Gross" test is a 3.0 gal/h test. The "Gross" test is not accurate enough to satisfy the monthly monitoring requirement. Since this is a recent problem, we don't yet have an answer as to why the tank gauge saved a "Gross" test result instead of a "Periodic" result.

Both of these examples remind us that tank gauges have limitations and that people are the real key to proper UST system operations. So, the doctor's advice for today is, "Make friends with your tank gauge so you understand what it is trying to tell you."

## "But My Tank is Empty"

Beverly McLeod, Regulatory Assistance Section

Once again, it's time to pay annual tank registration fees. Invoices were mailed June 1, 2005, to give underground storage tank (UST) owners and operators enough time to pay the fees and receive their new registration certificates before current certificates expire on July 31, 2005.

Owners who received a bill for USTs that were sold or permanently closed (by removing the tank from the ground or filling it in place with a solid, inert material) **before July 1, 2005**, must complete and submit a written correction. The correction must specify a date for the closure

or transfer of ownership. The correction must be sent to the Bureau of Land and Waste Management, UST Program, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201.

All regulated tanks that are in the ground on July 1, 2005, **both in use or temporarily closed**, are billable tanks. This means that owners with tanks in the ground that were empty but not properly closed received a bill. The law requires payment of the registration fee. Remember to display the new registration certificate in the office or kiosk of the facility. Also, it's a good idea to send your supplier a copy of the certificate.



## UST NEWS STAFF

Editor: John Kneece  
Publishing Editor: Rebecca Lindler  
Distribution: Denise Place

**(803) 896-6240**  
**Fax (803) 896-6245**  
**<http://www.scdhec.net/ust>**

CR-004160 6/05

Newsletter printed on recycled paper.

*Return Service Requested*

Underground Storage Tank Program  
SC DHEC  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

# UST ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

Singling out one facility in each of three categories gets tougher each edition. The Program passes along a big THANK YOU to everyone for continuing to improve compliance rates and for emphasizing regular operations and maintenance practices.

## NOMINEES

### **Small Retail (fewer than 10 tanks)**

Friarsgate Mobil LLC (Joseph Caughman) - Irmo  
Daves Grill and Grocery (Dave Golding) - Aiken  
Choice Cut Meats and Seafood (Sammie Hagood)- Allendale  
IGA (W. Lee Flowers)- Loris  
Grants Grocery (Darby Oil) - Chester

### **Large Retail**

Flying J Travel Plaza (Flying J Inc.) - Columbia  
Markette 4 (West Oil) - Bishopville  
Pantry 842 (Pantry Inc) - Lexington

### **Non-Retail**

Federal Correctional Facility (Federal Bureau of Prisons) - Edgefield  
Organizational Maintenance (SCANG) - Florence  
Organizational Maintenance (SCANG) - Hartsville  
Piedmont Park Fire District - Greenville

## WINNERS

**Choice Cut Meats and Seafood** - Allendale. Owner, **Sammie Hagood**, is all about doing it right. He has the right records and a monthly operations and maintenance plan.

**Flying J Travel Plaza** - Columbia. **Flying J Inc.** This site has it all: Redundant tank release detection (two methods in use and actively monitored), weekly sump and dispenser monitoring, and a prevent releases attitude.

**FCI Edgefield** - Edgefield. **Federal Bureau of Prisons.** This facility goes beyond the requirements; the operators know their equipment and keep it in top-notch condition.



South Carolina Department of Health  
and Environmental Control

# UST ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARD—June 2005

The South Carolina Petroleum Marketers Association and the South Carolina Petroleum Council join the Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program in recognizing the outstanding compliance efforts by this quarter's nominees.

**Large Retail (more than 10 tanks)**—Nominees in this category were:

Brabham Oil Company Inc.—Bamberg, S.C.

*Exxon Shop - Simpsonville, S.C.—Fred H Wood Oil Company*

The nominees in this category have great record keeping practices, neat and clean stores, and a helpful staff to answer questions. The winner in this category is **Exxon Shop in Simpsonville**. Congratulations to **Fred H. Wood Oil Company**, and thanks for the great job you do to protect and promote our environment.

**Small Retail (10 tanks or less)**—Nominees in this category are:

Cromwell C. Rawls, III—Florence S.C.

Western Front Amoco—Camden S.C.—B.B. Shirley, Jr.

*Little's Service Station—Gaffney S.C.—John Q. Little*

The winner in this category is **Western Front Amoco** owned by **B.B. Shirley, Jr.** in Camden S.C. The site is always clean and well-maintained. Records are present for the inspection and the facility has a clean compliance record since 1997. Thanks to B.B. Shirley Jr. and the operator of this facility, *Speaks Oil Co*, for the great job.

**Non - Retail Category**—Nominees in this category are:

Hartsville Section Shed—Hartsville S.C. - S.C. Department of Transportation (DOT)

Ryder Truck Rental—Florence S.C.—Ryder Truck Rental Inc.

Omnova Solutions—Chester S.C.—Omnova Solutions Inc.

*Tidewater Golf and Maintenance Facility—Myrtle Beach, S.C.—Southern Land & Golf Co.*

Congratulations to the **Hartsville Section Shed** and its staff for a job well done. This site is always "neat as a pin" according to the local inspector.

Thanks again to our winners and nominees. Let's continue to do all that we can to protect and preserve our environment!



South Carolina Department of Health  
and Environmental Control



# **1-888-481-0125**

## **REPORTING SPILLS AND RELEASES**

Anyone who sees or knows about a petroleum product or a hazardous substance being spilled, emitted, dumped, abandoned, or otherwise introduced into the environment may report the release. Anyone who is responsible for a release (producer, user, transporter, distributor, or property owner) must report the release.

- **Stop the release**
- **Contain the release**
- **Call local emergency responders  
(fire department, police, medical)**
- **Call state emergency response at  
1-888-481-0125**
- **Call your manager/central office**
- **Call UST Program (Within 72 hours)**
- **Keep THE SYSTEM out of service  
until repair/testing completed**

# Bureau of Land and Waste Management - UST Program

## Assistant Bureau Chief

Stan Clark (803) 896-6258

### Administrative Section

Abby Hogan (803) 896-6240  
(803) 896-6241  
(803) 896-6242

### Financial Section

Laura Pace (803) 896-6391  
Robertha Dorsey (803) 896-6392  
Heather Price (803) 896-6586

### Enforcement Section

Bette McKenney (803) 896-6846  
(803) 896-6650  
Joe Gladney (803) 896-6872

### Technology Support

Rick Lipkin (803) 896-6842

## Regulatory Compliance Division

Bob Hutchinson (803) 896-6390

### Compliance Section

John Kneece (803) 896-6841  
Leslie Yasinsac (803) 896-6844  
Robin Mack (803) 896-6845  
Donna Owens (803) 896-6651  
Denise Place (803) 896-6849

### Regulatory Assistance Section

Stacey Gardner (803) 896-6847  
Chuck Hightower (803) 896-6944  
Beverly McLeod (803) 896-6840  
Michelle Dennison (803) 896-6943  
Alison Hathcock (803) 896-6942  
Mark Berenbrok (803) 896-6848

## UST Inspectors - Contact through the Compliance Section (803) 896-6841/6844/6845

Susan Avery	Laura Daye	Tanitra Marshall	Thomas Mimms
Trey Morgan	Tim Pearson	Sherell Stevens	Gwen Taylor

## Assessment and Corrective Action Division

Kent Coleman (803) 896-6249

### North West

Chris Doll (803) 896-6585  
Debra Thoma (803) 896-6397  
Susan Block (803) 896-6676  
(803) 896-6648  
Wes Clymer (803) 896-6675

### Assessment

Robert Hodges (803) 896-6394  
Bob Faller (803) 896-6645  
Konstantine Akhvlediani (803) 896-6647  
Stephanie Briney (803) 896-6323  
Patricia Hydrick (803) 896-6629  
Minda Johnson (803) 896-6395  
Maia Milenkiva (803) 896-6664  
Art Shrader (803) 896-6669  
John Skowronek (803) 896-6633

### South East

Lee Monts (803) 896-6677  
Read Miner (803) 896-6584  
John Abernathy (803) 896-6396  
Joel Padgett (803) 896-6398